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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST, 1835.

A GENERAL Meeting was held this day ; the Right. Hon. the Earl of MUNSTER in the Chair.

Several donations of books were laid on the table ; among them were, from the Royal Society, the Philosophical Transactions for 1834. From Ram Comul Sen, of Calcutta, his Bengalee and English Dictionary (translated from Dr. Johnson's English Dictionary). From John Arrowsmith, Esq. his "London Atlas of Universal Geography." Thanks were ordered to be returned to the respective donors. An extract from Capt. Low's Account of Tenasserim was read to the meeting.

This being the day on which a diploma of resident-membership was to be presented to Lieut. Burnes, there was an unusually large attendance of the members of the Society and their friends. After the minutes of the preceding meeting had been read, EARL MUNSTER rose, and, having called the attention of the meeting to the principal object of their assemblage, proceeded to address himself to Lieut. Burnes as follows :—

"SIR,—In consequence of the unavoidable absence of our president, whose more important, though I am sure I can vouch for his feeling them to be not less interesting, duties, it falls to my lot, as vice-president, to state to you, in the name of the ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY of Great Britain and Ireland, the object of our having particularly requested your attendance here this day. I regret sincerely the absence of our President, because the gratifying pledge of the sentiments this Society entertains towards you, which it is their intention now to bestow upon you, would, I feel, have come in every way better from him ; but should I fail in my duty, which is to express fully and with propriety the sentiments of the Society, it will not be so much their fault, or their want of conviction of your merits, as the fault of me, their organ.

"Allow me, sir, in the first place, to congratulate you, in the name of the Society, on the happy completion of your successful enterprise ; the personal risks and dangers of which have in no degree obscured its splendid results. Your journey, and the pursuits which you incorporated with it, through Central Asia, must be considered by the Society as most peculiarly embraced within the scope of those objects, for the attainment of which they are congregated, and for which also they received their charter ; they have, therefore, come to the unanimous resolution to present you with a special mark of their high approbation : and I would here observe, that however great the meed of applause may be which you have received from other learned societies, the value of whose honours I would by no means wish to depreciate, yet there is not any learned or scientific

body within the realm which is so well able to appreciate your merits, and, consequently, so proper to pronounce upon them as the Royal Asiatic Society.

"It may be difficult, therefore, considering the number, as well as the value of those encomiums that the societies to which I refer bestowed with so much justice upon you, to add to their applause. But, sir, I must be allowed to say, that the very fact of so many, and such distinguished bodies having showered their praises and honours upon you, is of itself a sufficient proof of your deserts; and it evinces, very strongly, the value of that new information which you have brought us, and how wide and extensive is the field which you have explored. Whether it be the sciences of geography or geology, antiquity or general literature; whether it be the politician, the soldier, or the merchant; whether it be the man of pure science, or the man of general research; all have alike admitted your high merits, and have anxiously hastened to do you justice.

"These various societies have sifted the stores you have brought home, and the result has proved how much more gold than sand they contain. Each has said and done so much towards honouring you, that it would be difficult to find any other society except this, the Royal Asiatic Society, the approbation of which could in any degree enhance your gratification. But we, sir, feel not only that we can, but that we may add to your praises and to your gratification; for we differ from all other institutions in this respect, that we claim Asia, with its mythology, its history, its antiquities, arts, and sciences, as the objects of our particular researches. Thus I am happy that the Royal Asiatic Society, though certainly not amongst the least, appears to be the last to offer you the honours within its gift: claiming as we do the power and ability to criticise and judge of your merits in the aggregate, we now, by our act, affirm, that whether the extent of your travels, the interesting points they have illustrated, the good they are likely to produce, the additions they have brought to the stores of science in almost every branch,—whether, I say, these points be considered singly or collectively, there can be no doubt that they place your enterprise at the very highest point of praise. To yourself, sir, it must be highly gratifying to have reopened to us a great river of antiquity, and a classical country; both of which, but most certainly the former, have been a sealed letter to Europe for two thousand years. It must be an equal source of satisfaction to you to have penetrated to the great seat of learning in the East, the *Umm ul Bilad*,¹ "the mother of cities," and to have joined her to the great family of mankind. But, sir, all this has been repeated to you so often, I fear *ad nauseam*, that I will not now detain you, or this meeting, by repeating it. I will, therefore, sum up my detail of your exploits by assuring you that the Royal Asiatic Society considers you to have performed for Central Asia what Bruce did for the Nile, and Denham and Clapperton for the Niger and Central Africa. Such are the results of your expedition; but whilst I thus refer to them, I must not conceal from you the high opinion which this Society entertains of your personal conduct, nor the fact that this public expression of their feeling is strongly connected with your diplomatic arrangements with the Amirs of Sind; and bears as well on your enterprising character, as on your judgment under difficulties and danger, and on your discretion when in communication with the natives. I may say, indeed, with reference to the last point, that there is no society but that which now surrounds you which could estimate your difficulties, for there is no other society which possesses the means requisite to form a judgment on them. Nor can I refrain from commenting, in the highest terms, upon a circumstance which is alike honourable to yourself individually, and creditable to the character of your countrymen collectively, and which is likely to produce so much good in our future intercourse with Central Asia, namely, your having avoided all deceit, and your having on all occasions frankly avowed to the chiefs your rank, station, and country. Entertaining these sentiments towards

you, the Royal Asiatic Society has, with one voice, unanimously resolved to go out of its ordinary course of proceeding, and to confer upon you an honour, of which I fear the narrow limits to which further inquiry is confined, renders it unlikely that there should be such another claimant. It is an honour which places you amongst us in the same situation that you occupy towards Europe, alone in your distinction. The diploma which I now have the honour to present to you, admits you, during your life, to all the privileges of a member of this institution, and altogether exempts you from the payment of the usual fees and subscription. Allow me, sir, to congratulate you upon becoming one of us; and permit me, at the same time, to mention, incidentally, a circumstance which it will doubtless afford you much pleasure to learn, inasmuch as it proves that the result of your travels was amongst the desiderata of this Society at an early period of its formation. A proposition was brought forward at that period to have a medal struck, to be offered as an inducement to enterprising individuals to take the very same journey which you have now accomplished. This proposition was not carried into effect; but, had it been adopted, I should now have had the gratification of placing that medal in your hands. I mention this circumstance without hesitation; for however strongly I may regret the inability of this Society thus to reward you, yet I have the strongest conviction that to a mind like yours, the spirit in which the Society makes the donation will alone be looked at, apart from any consideration of its value; and in this light I am certain you will regard the scroll of parchment with which I have presented you to be of equal value with the Kûh-i-Nûr.¹

"Having now done my public duty, you must allow me, sir, to congratulate you individually, and to express the gratification I feel at making your personal acquaintance; and in the name of this Society I now wish you every success in that career in your profession which your talents and abilities will claim for you."

SIR ALEXANDER JOHNSTON.—"I really must be permitted to make a few observations with reference to the occasion which draws this meeting together, for I feel it to be one of the most interesting which has occurred since I have had the honour to become a member of the Royal Asiatic Society. The services which have been rendered by the distinguished officer who now occupies our attention in a geographical, political, and moral point of view are inestimable. By fixing with accuracy the position of Bokhara, of Balkh, and of the western range of the great Himalaya mountains, this gentleman has done more towards the construction of a map which may be relied on of those countries, than has been achieved by any person since the epoch of Alexander the Great. We now see formed by his indefatigable industry and patient courage, an all but continuous link of communication between western Asia and the Caspian sea; we may shortly expect to find that the commerce which is carried on in the ports of that sea has been extended to the Hindû-Chinese boundaries; and we may, at no very distant period, look for its spread throughout the whole of northern India. The restrictions which have hitherto been placed upon the employment of British capital, owing to the obstacles which have been raised to all external intercourse with those countries, are now in a fair way to be removed, and the employment of the enormous resources at the command of Great Britain which are now locked up in inactivity, will give fresh life to that spirit of commercial enterprise which is so eminently characteristic of our countrymen. We may also very reasonably expect that, together with the extension of commerce, the attendant blessings of civilisation will be disseminated throughout the semibarbarous states of Central Asia; and that by means of that great moral power, the press—a power to which I confidently look as the ultimate means of civilising the globe and raising man in the scale of creation. It has but too often happened that persons from whose energies great discoveries have resulted, have perished

¹ Literally the "Mountain of Light." It is the celebrated diamond of which Nadir Shah despoiled the Mogul, Shah Muhammed. It now forms part of the Persian regalia.

from sickness, fatigue, or other causes, before they have reaped the reward of their labours. It must, therefore, be a source of true joy and earnest congratulation, that such a fate has not befallen the individual who now stands before us. It is also a matter of further congratulation that the faculties, the age, and the health of Lieut. Burnes, are now in their prime, so as to enable him, not only to enjoy the fruits of his past exertions, but also to qualify him in the highest degree for making fresh ones. That such exertions may very soon be called for, is betokened by every appearance of the Oriental political horizon. The situation of Egypt; that of Turkey; the rise, within a comparatively recent period, of a great power in the north, which is now fast proceeding towards the north-western Persian provinces, all tend to create, not only a political, but a moral ferment in the East, which must end in the subversion of some states and the erections of new ones. The contest will most probably be decided in those countries which have been recently traversed by our new associate, and the information which he has brought us respecting them is thus rendered invaluable. I most confidently trust that the proceedings which have taken place this day in this Society, will point out to every man in India the advantage which is to be derived from enterprise like that of Lieut. Burnes; and that the rewards and honours bestowed upon him will stimulate others to make such efforts as are within their scope and sphere. I may also add, that I entertain a strong hope that the government, both in Great Britain and India, will be impressed with the necessity of availing itself of Lieut. Burnes's distinguished talents, and that he will be placed in a situation where they can be developed to their fullest extent: and I confidently anticipate that if their development be at all concomitant with the past, they will not fail to secure to him the transmission of his name to posterity under the most favourable auspices. I do, therefore, my lord, most heartily congratulate you, and this honourable Society, upon the accession of a member so distinguished as Lieut. Burnes."

Lieutenant BURNES then rose and said: "My Lord and Gentlemen—I have felt myself placed in many trying situations since my return to this land, but I have been placed in none more so than the present. The honour which this Society has done me, and the kindness of expression towards me on the part of your lordship, almost unfit me for reply. But I trust I am able to appreciate justly the applause of so eminent a Society, conveyed to me as it has been by one so distinguished by his rank, but not more distinguished in that respect than by his devotion to and zeal in the cause of Asiatic science and literature. I have the honour to see my name associated with many societies for the prosecution of science and learning, and amongst them are three Asiatic Societies in the East; but this circumstance has by no means rendered me indifferent to the approbation of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. On the contrary, I had looked forward to the evening of life, after my period of active service had passed away, to join it. Imagine, therefore, my joy at finding myself, by an act of peculiar favour, chosen its adopted son. It is an honour to me of great value; for here, in this place, I find myself at home, amidst the productions of that country in which I have passed fourteen years of my life. Around me I see the monuments, the relics, the antiquities of India; and, what is still more pleasing to me, I see also many of those who had devoted their time and their talents to the illustration of those monuments. I feel myself again amongst those, whose associations, and whose connexions have been for years past identified with mine. I cannot, however, attribute the honours, the favours, which have been showered upon me to any merit which I possess. I am rather disposed to account for them by the novelty and high classical interest of the countries which I have visited. I hope, however, that I have been at least instrumental in pointing out that there is a rich harvest for the future inquirer in Central Asia, and I shall be contented to be looked upon as a gleaner in that wide field before the harvest is reaped; for I confidently trust that the journey I have performed will encourage future

and more talented persons to travel there. In the presence of the Royal Asiatic Society, I have now the pleasure to pay a debt of gratitude which has been long due to it. When that distinguished and amiable man, the late lamented Sir John Malcolm, assumed the government of Bombay, he was charged by this Society with communications to the Literary Society of Bombay: amongst them was a copy of the *desiderata* put forth by the Royal Asiatic Society. This paper, with a spirit finely characteristic of him, Sir John Malcolm had lithographed and extensively circulated at Bombay. A copy of it fell into my hands; and it was carried by me throughout my wanderings in Asia. Often when in the desert—often when in the city, far removed from civilisation, have I referred to that paper with the utmost advantage. My inquiries have often been guided by it into channels whither neither education nor inclination would have led me; and thus, gentlemen, by attending to your instructions and guidance, I have been enabled to fill up many a hiatus which would otherwise have remained void. It is, therefore, most gratifying to me, in the presence of this Society, to acknowledge my obligations to it; and I feel it to be my duty to offer, as a record to be placed amongst the archives of your Society, the identical paper which has been so long my companion, and so frequently my guide. I perhaps may venture, most respectfully, to recommend its yet more extensive circulation, because, as a *precis* of *desiderata*, I look upon it to be invaluable. I must now candidly confess, that I cannot, for an instant, allow myself to appropriate the honours, which you have conferred upon me, to myself individually. I am certain that their immediate effect will be of far higher utility than the mere gratification of the ambition or vanity of an individual. They will have their effect hereafter, by leading my fellow-countrymen in the East on to further exertions, who, whilst they are advancing the important interests of this Society, will be stimulated by the reflection, that the more correct and intimate their knowledge of Asia and its people is rendered, the better enabled will England become to govern her Asiatic possessions, with credit to herself and advantage to them; and the sooner would arrive that period, at which the blessings of her civilisation might be spread over them. I have now only, in conclusion, to reiterate to this assembly my earnest and grateful thanks for the distinguished honour conferred upon me. Your Lordship has alluded to the former intention of the Society to bestow a medal upon the individual who should first perform the journey from which I have returned. But I must be allowed to say, that I prize the honourable testimonial which I now hold in my hand far beyond the most precious medal. I shall regard it as the Indians do their *mantra*,—as a spell to excite me to further exertions; and if my past efforts may be considered to have entitled me to the possession of a document, of which I have so much reason to be proud, I can only say, that it will act as a double stimulus in future efforts, in all of which I shall be happy to receive this Society's instructions. A few days, gentlemen, and I shall be gone from amongst you; but that which has passed here this day will never be effaced from my memory whilst life endures, though I am now compelled to say, farewell." (Mr. BURNES then sat down, amidst loud applause, deeply affected.)

EARL MUNSTER rose, and addressing the meeting, said: "I had not anticipated having again so soon to return my thanks to Lieut. Burnes; but, sir (addressing Lieut. Burnes), I must say, that if you prize the diploma which you hold, you may rest assured that an almost equal value will be placed by the Society on the interesting paper which you have so kindly presented to us. Moreover, I am convinced, that if the praises and rewards within the gift of this Society shall call into life a further spirit of inquiry, the interesting document which has so long accompanied you will, by being placed among the relics to which you have alluded, be still more likely than ever to create a desire for enterprise and research; and I therefore shall move, that it be placed with care and veneration amongst the archives of this Society."

SATURDAY, MARCH 7TH, 1835.

A GENERAL Meeting was held this day; the Right Hon. Sir ALEXANDER JOHNSTON, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. Among the donations presented to the Society were—from the Asiatic Society of Bengal, a Tibetan and English dictionary, by Alexander Csoma de Kőrös; and from Lieutenant Alexander Burnes, a camel-hair Bokhára cloak, worn by him on his travels in the Punjáb.

Thanks were ordered to be returned to the respective donors.

Thomas Ogilvy, Esq. and James Ritchie, Esq. were elected resident members.

The right hon. the Chairman, on the certificates of General Allard, General Ventura, and Monsieur Court, as corresponding members, being read a first time, took occasion to say, that the Council had directed the Secretary to recommend these gentlemen to the notice of the Society, in consequence of the assistance and advice which they had afforded to Lieut. Burnes and M. Jacquemont, whilst those travellers were resident at the court of Runjeet Singh. The chairman further expressed a hope that the Society would agree in the sentiments which the council entertained of these gentlemen, by conferring on them the only distinction at their disposal at present, it not being possible to elect them Foreign Members, as the numbers to which those members are limited were already filled up.

The paper read at this meeting was the continuation and conclusion of that read at the preceding meeting. Another article, selected from Captain Low's MSS. was also read, giving an account of the laws of the Burmans.

SATURDAY, MARCH 21ST, 1835.

A GENERAL Meeting was held this day; the Right Hon. Sir GORE OUSELEY, Bart., Vice-President, in the Chair.

The Chairman, in calling the attention of the meeting, stated, that he had been requested by the Council, before proceeding to the usual routine of business upon these occasions, to read the following letter addressed by the President of the Society to Captain Harkness, the gentlemen who had held the office of Secretary to the Society for the last two years; and who, though from bad health and other urgent causes he was obliged to signify his intention of retiring from that office, had still kindly promised to consider himself as in temporary charge till some further arrangement could be made. He should now read the letter:

“London, March 23, 1835.

“SIR,—The Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland have, by a unanimous vote, in which I most cordially concur, requested me to offer to you the expression of their great regret, that, from your being obliged shortly to return to India, and from the unfavourable state of your health, you are compelled to retire from the office of Secretary to the Society.

“The Council would have been truly glad still to endeavour to secure to the Society the advantages of your important services in that office, had the cogent reasons for your determination left them any other alternative than at once, though very reluctantly, to acquiesce. In doing this, however, the Council cannot but recall to mind the readiness with which you were pleased, gratuitously, to undertake the onerous and very responsible office of Secretary, and the

well-directed attention and complete success with which you have performed the duties of it. They are aware of the advantages you have rendered to the Society in various other ways, especially in the late appropriate change in the publication of the Transactions, the originating and the effecting of which they attribute entirely to yourself. They observe with pleasure, too, the strict regard to economy you have maintained in all needful expenditures; and, truly sensible as they are of the Society's great obligation to you, they will take an immediate opportunity of recommending that the Society record its grateful thanks to you for disinterestedly undertaking the office of Secretary in May, 1833; for the distinguished ability and zeal with which you have performed the duties of it since that time; as well as for the constant attention and unwearied endeavours you have devoted in other ways to promote the interests and prosperity of the Society.

"At the same time, the Council begs leave, moreover, to assure you it will always take a lively interest in your welfare and success: it solicits the continuance of your counsel and assistance, when these can be conceded during your stay in this country; and it is satisfied that it may rely with perfect security on your disposition, under all favourable circumstances, whether at home or abroad, to endeavour to forward the prosperity and the views of the Royal Asiatic Society.

"I have the honour, &c. &c.

(Signed)

"C. W. WILLIAMS WYNN,
"President."

The right hon. the Chairman then proposed the following resolution:—

"That this meeting has received the notification of Captain Harkness's wish to resign the office of Secretary; that it is fully sensible of the great advantages he has rendered to the Society; and that it still indulges a hope of being favoured with such literary assistance from him as he can conveniently bestow upon it, whether at home or abroad; that, on the present occasion, it can only record its grateful thanks to Captain Harkness for his disinterestedly undertaking the office of Secretary in May 1833; for the distinguished ability and zeal with which he has performed the duties of it since that time, as well as for the constant attention and unwearied endeavours he has devoted in other ways to promote the interests and prosperity of the Society."

The above resolution was seconded by the Right Hon. Sir Alex. Johnston, and carried *unâ voce*.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Of the donations laid on the table may be especially noticed the following:

From the Rev. J. Roberts, his "Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures." From Sir Charles Forbes, Bart., two impressions of seals, exhibiting the European style of amoral bearings, and which had been recently adopted by two native gentlemen of Bombay. From John McNeil, Esq., nine works on religious subjects, in Persian and Arabic, being the first of the series printed at the press established at Tehran, by Abbas Mirza. From John Martin, Esq., an impression from his engraving of the Crucifixion.

Thanks were ordered to be returned to the respective donors.

Henry S. Græme, Esq., Capt. Morgan Chase, and Charles Purton Cooper, Esq. F.R.S. &c were elected Resident Members.

The paper read to the meeting was one selected from Capt. Low's MSS.

SATURDAY, APRIL 4TH, 1835.

A GENERAL Meeting was held this day; the Right Hon. Sir ALEXANDER JOHNSTON, Vice-President, in the Chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Several donations of books were presented to the Society; among them were the following :—

From T. T. Rennell, Esq., a general Dutch History, in 8 vols. From Edward Thornton, Esq., his "India, its State and Prospects." From Dr. Mohl, his edition of "Y-King Antiquissimus Sinarum," &c.

Thanks were ordered to be returned to the respective donors.

The Chevalier General Ventura, General Allard, and M. Court, officers in the service of his Highness Maharájá Runjeet Singh, were elected Corresponding Members.

A paper, containing an account of Martaban and Tenasserim, selected from Captain Low's MSS., was read to the Meeting.